

Indiana Department of Labor

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Sexual Harassment

In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized sexual harassment as a form of illegal sex discrimination.

Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

You must submit to this behavior to keep your job or to get a promotion, a good job assignment or some other job benefit; or This behavior unreasonably interferes with your work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include pressure for sexual favors; pornographic material left on your desk or work area; touching, "goosing," patting, hugging; leaning against; leering, whistling, catcalls or howling; using demeaning terms such as "sweetheart," "babe" or "honey"; sexual teasing and jokes; posting cartoons, posters or drawings of a sexual or insulting nature; asking personal questions, telling lies or spreading rumors about your social or sex life; making sexual remarks or gestures; and actual or attempted sexual assault.

An employer has the legal responsibility to investigate sexual harassment complaints and to take appropriate actions to end the harassment and make sure it doesn't happen again.

You are not required to complain to the person who is harassing you. But you should make sure that you, your union if you have one or someone you designate lets management know about your complaint. You also should keep a written record of the harassment incidents and evidence of your job performance. If your employer has an internal complaint procedure, you are required to use it.

If you have been the victim of sexual harassment and discrimination, you may choose to find recourse in legal action. 9to5 has put together some hints to help you make your way through the system.

If you think you have been sexually harassed, you may file [employment discrimination charges](#) as an individual or as part of a group (known as "class action") with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The charges must be filed on an EEOC form within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act. If you are represented by a union, contact your union steward, who can help you file charges. Federal employees must file discrimination charges within their own agency.

You can file a charge in person, by mail or by telephone by contacting the [nearest EEOC office](#), or call 800-669-4000 for more information (800-669-6820 for the hearing impaired). All charges must include:

Your name, address and telephone number.
Your job title.
A brief description of the problem.
When the incident(s) occurred.
The type of discrimination you encountered.

For more information, visit the [EEOC question-and-answer page about discrimination](#).

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